

Time to get your horse noticed

Importance of taking a good photograph to promote your animal

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We live in a digital age where the world is our oyster with regard to promoting stock for sale. It is the norm to upload photographs and videos of horses for sale on the web, as clients are reluctant to travel without seeing a photograph and/or video of the animal first.

In fact, I have heard of occasions where buyers purchased horses from photographs and videos posted without ever actually seeing the horse in the flesh! Although a rare occurrence, it illustrates the influence a good photograph and video can have on potential clients, assuming the horse meets their requirements.

It is imperative when uploading photos of your horse or pony that you realise that this is your sales pitch and presentation to potential customers. No amount of words will make up for a bad photo or video.

However, unfortunately, many adverts posted of horses for sale do not show the horse looking its best which, in many cases, can have a negative impact on the marketing campaign.

More often than not, you find that people upload any old photograph at hand to promote their stock. Many are left subsequently scratching their heads as to why they had difficulty selling their animal or why in a lot of cases they got no enquiries at all.

It takes considerable time and preparation to take a suitable photograph

of your horse. Put yourself in the shoes of the potential purchaser.

If you were to buy a horse in the morning, how would you like it presented to you? For example, if you went to buy a car and visited a car lot with two identical cars on offer, except one is valeted and clean and the other is not, which one would you go for?

The age and the market you are targeting should influence the types of photos you will post. One photo that should be consistent for all animals and all marketing campaigns is that of the horse standing in open stance.

Sequence of legs for open stance

Near fore directly under the shoulder, near hind directly under the point of buttock, with the off fore slightly behind the near fore leg and off hind leg slightly in front of the near hind leg (near side = side closest to viewer; off side = side furthest away from viewer).

You don't need to be a professional photographer to take a good photograph of your horse. The most important thing is that the horse is well presented and in the centre of the photograph.

The quality of photographs taken by smart phones today is quite high. If the lighting is poor, even the most sophisticated cameras will struggle to take a good photograph though.

Taking a good photograph of your horse requires planning:

- Pick a location which has a neutral background, preferably a hedge or wall. The surface should be hard and level.
- Pick a day when the weather is good, preferably with the sun shining, and when taking the photograph, the sun is behind the camera.
- At a minimum, two assistants are required to aid the photographer; one to hold the horse and the other to get the horse's attention, i.e. so that the horse



stands alert and is looking forward with its ears pricked forward.

- Helpful things to have at hand include a bucket with feed in it, something that rattles or something to wave in the air.
- The horse should be in good health and have its feet trimmed. The mane should be lying neatly to the off side or plaited.
- If younger than three, the animal should wear a clean, correctly fitted leather head collar.
- If three years of age and over, it



should be wearing a clean and correctly fitted bridle.

Photographs to consider including, depending on the age of animal:

- A side-on shot of the horse/pony standing in open stance, alert but relaxed, with ears pricked forward.
- A photo of the horse loose jumping or under saddle, preferably side on-with the fence. If being ridden, the rider should be smartly dressed and wear a helmet.

- A good head shot of the horse.
- The horse should be in good health and well turned out.

If selling a foal:

- The foal should be in good condition and finished coating or shedding.

The marketplace is very competitive, particularly the middle market for clients. Therefore, it is in your best interests to upload photographs of your horse looking its best in order to give you the greatest possibility of attracting clients through the farm gate.